

Casey's Legacy

Washington.

There's something surreal about the way William Casey's defenders speak of his legacy to the CIA. He reanimated it, they say; he revived it. He did so as a terrorist might "animate" a build-

"finding" that ordered a trade of arms for hostages.

Mr. Casey was supposed to restore the CIA after Stansfield Turner had "dismantled" it. Now we see that Turner's fault was that he made the agency obey the law. That is enough to infuriate "the intelligence community," which thinks it cannot be effective within legal restraints.

By Garry Wills

ing with a bomb, making its components jump.

What is Mr. Casey's legacy? A world where hostage-taking is a growth industry. A world where we invoke international law to extradite one terrorist after having flouted the same law in order to protect our own mining of Nicaragua's harbors.

It is thanks to Mr. Casey's CIA that we withdrew from World Court proceedings, after having been a champion of the court, because we could not defend Mr. Casey's own brand of nocturnal terrorism in the light of day.

Mr. Casey was the promoter of the CIA's version of Col. Oliver North — Duane Clarridge, the mastermind behind the assassination manuals. Having got the CIA into trouble with Congress, Mr. Clarridge was not rebuked or inhibited by Mr. Casey, but promoted to collaborate with Colonel North in circumventing Congress.

Mr. Casey's CIA, with the services of St. Sney Sporkin, invented the legal sophistry of the presidential

With Mr. Casey, we got the worst of both worlds — rampant illegality and bungling inefficiency. He made the CIA look simultaneously foolish and vile. Mr. Casey's actions have alienated our allies in the anti-terrorism effort, encouraged hostage-takers, made our own position ridiculous, hamstringing the president, infuriated the secretary of state, affronted Congress, and given the Soviet Union endless propaganda material.

Phillip Knightley, in his new book, "The Second Oldest Profession," argues persuasively that most spying in the history of nations has been ineffectual when not detrimental. Still, he goes too far: There is a legitimate place for intelligence gathering, and even for covert activities. But there is no role in a democracy for our own brand of terrorism — for assassinations, for minings, for collaboration with illegal arms dealers. Until we learn that, every CIA director who imitates William Casey will leave the same legacy behind him — one of national shame and degradation.